

Submission provided by: Nancy Campana and Brenda Bot-Drake

The Town of LaSalle is rich in trails, parks and recreation areas that connect the community and is made up of a mixture of modern and historical buildings and bordered by a beautiful waterfront with incredible sunsets. We made our home in LaSalle 25 years ago and I have watched with great pride as LaSalle has developed and grown into the beautiful community it is today.

As a family we have witnessed LaSalle's generosity when 8 years ago our son Rocky passed away. We also witnessed the generosity and kindness from so many in LaSalle when we co-founded the Run for Rocky and ran this event for 5 years as well as tabled a petition in the House of Commons to make change to organ donation rules in Canada. The Legacy of the funds raised though Run for Rocky continue to support LGBTQ+ efforts in the entire Windsor Essex County region and funding will continue for many years to come. Most recently when Covid began, the Run for Rocky Legacy Project donated \$10,000 to help fund free counselling for LGBTQ+ youth and Rainbow Families through Family Services Windsor Essex during a time of great isolation for many.

In early June of 2020, I was asked to be the captain for the LaSalle June 27th Miracle Food donation Drive. I reached out to Councillor Sue Desjarlais to co-captain Lasalle with me. In just a short 3.5 weeks Sue and I and our team of leaders were quickly able to mobilize the entire community with an end result that brought in 340,000 tons of food donations and brought together over 1000 volunteers. The large majority of citizens in LaSalle made donations creating a traffic jam on Front Rd and creating a we can do spirit like LaSalle has never seen before. The donations brought in were more than double that of any other town in Essex County. I have heard time and time again by the administration team that LaSalle's generosity and community spirit of LaSalle are incomparable.

When Brenda and I had our first conversation it was our intent from the onset to raise funds for this project. I told Brenda in our first conversation that I was sure the Run for Rocky Legacy project would be willing to make a donation to help cover some of the funds needed. I was confident that raising the money to cover the remainder of the project costs was a very attainable goal knowing the amount of support there is for LGBTQ+ efforts in LaSalle. Since that time two corporate donors have committed their intent to help and are presently working through their head offices to secure a firm and larger donations. One will be a direct donation and the other will be a commitment to upkeep the crosswalk for up to 5 years.

There are now over 30 Rainbow coloured crosswalks in Ontario in small towns and larger cities including in Halton Hills, Barrie, several in London & Toronto, Niagara Falls, Burlington, Chatham Oshawa, Aurora, Sarnia, Thunder Bay, Sault St Marie, Coburg, Port Elgin, Prescott and as Brenda mentioned Kincardine to name a few. The rainbow crosswalks have become synonymous with an Accepting & Welcoming Community. Liveable communities who show visible signs of being welcoming and accepting to diverse cross sections of the populations have proven time and time again through economic studies that they attract corporations and developers to their communities.

Essex County is one of the few counties in Ontario that does not have a Pride Crosswalk on a municipal road. We are the only community with a larger urban population between here and Toronto without a rainbow crosswalk on a municipal road. Those who live here know what a giving and caring community this is and it seems the perfect fit for the first crosswalk of this kind in Essex county to be located right here in LaSalle. In addition to the welcoming community we are LaSalle also has a wealth of LGBTQ+ history that we should be proud of.

I know that this crosswalk would be meaningful to not only many citizens of LaSalle but also to many people in Essex County. If council approves to move ahead with the crosswalk tonight Brenda and I are committed to begin fundraising tonight and lock in the corporate commitments that have come forward. The Run for Rocky Legacy Project has been collecting donations and issuing tax receipts for any donations that come starting tonight. At this time we have sufficient funds to cover the cost of the crosswalk along with a commitment to maintain the crosswalk for a 5 year period. Consideration has also been given to ensure the design of the crosswalk is safe for those with colour deficiencies.

In closing a rainbow crosswalk at the main intersection of Lasalle connecting the community to town hall will shout out "You are welcome here, you are accepted here you are safe here" Every citizen in LaSalle will benefit from this strong message. I do hope council agrees

Thank you for your kind and compassionate consideration of this proposal.